Review of steel projects

3007. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE:
SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have, so far, made any review about the functioning of the steel projects;

(b) to what extent the current production of steel is sufficient to meet the domestic demand;

(c) whether the facilities being extended to these plants are not being utilised properly; and

(d) if so, whether any review has been made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Government have constituted a Project Coordination Group under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for Steel to address the problems of on going steel projects as well as the problems being faced by iron & steel industry. Three meetings of the Project Coordination Group have been conducted so far.

(b) The Indian Iron & Steel Industry is fully capable of meeting almost all the requirements of steel in the country barrings a few sizes and grades.

(c) and (d) Government periodically review the utilization of facilities extended to steel plants in the public sector as part of the review of the overall performance of these steel plants. No such reviews are conducted by the Government in respect of steel plants in the private sector.

Cut in steel production

3008. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel companies across the country propose to cut production to counter depressed market conditions and improve their quality; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) and (b) After the liberalisation of Steel Sector, Production of Steel is determined by the interplay of market forces. The Steel Companies in the Private and Public Sector regulate their production as per market demand.

Repair of coke oven batteries by VSP

3009. DR. BIPLAB DAS GUPTA: will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Visakhapatnam Steel Plant had to incur an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 102 crores towards repair of coke oven batteries;

(b) whether it is a fact that the batteries which were commissioned in 1989, 1991 and 1992 had a guaranteed life of 15 to 17 years;

(c) if so, the reasons for incurring the avoidable expenditure; and

(d) the action taken to recover the loss to the exchequer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Visakhapatnam Steel Plant incurred an expenditure of Rs. 82.78 crores towards repair of coke oven batteries.

(b) Yes, Sir. The coke oven batteries in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant were commissioned in 1989, 1991 and 1992. coke oven batteries of 7 metres height in steel plants have a normal life of 15—17 years. The three 7 metres high coke oven batteries of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant had no specific guarantee from the designers for a life of 15—17 years.

(c) and (d) The matter of premature break down of these coke oven batteries in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was referred to CBI in April, 2001, which registered a preliminary inquiry. This inquiry is at an initial stage. The Government will take further appropriate action after completion of the inquiry.

Wage Board for the employees of SAIL

3010. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a Wage Board for the SAIL employees;